
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5807

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens and Hargrove)

READ FIRST TIME 02/19/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to child protective services training programs;
2 adding a new section to chapter 44.28 RCW; creating new sections; and
3 providing expiration dates.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that child
6 protective services employees who promote healthy, safe relationships
7 between children and families benefit from training designed to improve
8 the efficacy and efficiency of child protective services
9 investigations. The state has an important interest in helping to
10 promote healthy, safe relationships between children and families. The
11 state also has an interest in requiring intensive training for social
12 workers who are committed to investigating the most difficult child
13 protective services cases.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The secretary of the department of social
15 and health services shall establish a pilot program, focusing on
16 intensive child protective services training in two field offices of
17 the children's administration. The training and supporting field work
18 shall be attended by all child protective services workers assigned to

1 the pilot sites and shall last for a total of ten days. In selecting
2 the two field offices to participate in the program, the secretary
3 shall endeavor to site one in an urban office and the other in a rural
4 office.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The social workers who participate in
6 the intensive child protective services training program must attend
7 the training, either before they are assigned their own child
8 protective services caseload or as soon as possible after the pilot
9 program begins. Each social worker who participates shall, for the
10 duration of the training, and for the duration of the pilot program,
11 receive a financial incentive from the department of social and health
12 services in recognition of the additional work undertaken as part of
13 the pilot program.

14 (2) All social workers who participate in the intensive child
15 protective services training program must be trained for ten days
16 within six months of June 30, 2007.

17 (3) The social workers who participate in the intensive child
18 protective services training program shall receive advanced
19 investigative training developed by the department of social and health
20 services, in collaboration with local law enforcement, the attorney
21 general's office, and the northwest institute for children and families
22 at the University of Washington in such areas as principles of
23 investigations, critical thinking, interviewing witnesses, analyzing
24 and preserving evidence, legal framework and policies, and writing
25 investigation reports. The training may also include courses in staff
26 safety, including basic self-defense and handling volatile situations.
27 Participants in the program may also receive specialized training in
28 drug investigations.

29 (4) The social workers who participate in the intensive child
30 protective services training program shall receive training from
31 medical experts or child psychologists in such areas as recognizing
32 physical abuse injuries to children and assessing whether children
33 present symptoms of self-mutilation or self-harm.

34 (5) The children's administration shall provide and social workers
35 in the pilot program are required to participate in other courses of
36 advanced training, in such areas as advanced critical thinking,
37 analysis, and techniques for combating confirmatory bias. For the

1 purposes of this section, "confirmatory bias" means the inclination to
2 emphasize evidence that tends to support a preexisting conclusion,
3 rather than continuing to objectively analyze new evidence.

4 (6) All social workers who participate in the intensive child
5 protective services training program shall show measurable proficiency
6 in tools and skills that are the objective of the training, in a manner
7 that can be established by the department.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 44.28 RCW
9 to read as follows:

10 (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall begin
11 evaluating the intensive child protective services training pilot
12 program at least by December 30, 2007, and make a report to the
13 legislature by December 30, 2009.

14 (2) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall design
15 its evaluation of the intensive child protective services training
16 pilot program to determine if the pilot program:

17 (a) Produces more efficient investigations, with reports being
18 completed more quickly;

19 (b) Enhances staff morale and staff retention, as compared to other
20 field offices;

21 (c) Generates higher quality reports, with documented evidence that
22 clearly supports findings of abuse or neglect;

23 (d) Reduces the number of child abuse and neglect allegations
24 involving the same children and families;

25 (e) Reduces the number of continuances or delays in court
26 proceedings; or

27 (f) Reduces the number of dependency petitions that are dismissed
28 because there is insufficient evidence or there are problems with case
29 investigations or documentation.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Sections 1 through 3 of this act expire
31 July 1, 2009.

32 (2) Section 4 of this act expires July 1, 2010.

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